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FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CALL VETERANS JOB FAIR A SUCCESS, AS HUNDREDS CONNECT WITH AREA EMPLOYERS

With nearly 500 veterans and their spouses taking advantage of a unique training and hiring event aimed exclusively at transitioning military families, Franklin County Commissioners are calling the Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair a successful first step in combating unemployment among the region's veterans.

"Veterans are highly trained, highly skilled workers, yet across our country, an estimated 12 percent of the two million Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who returned home are jobless. That number nearly triples when you look at the unemployment rate for younger veterans between the ages of 20 and 24," said Board of Commissioners President Paula Brooks, "No veteran should have to fight for a job at home after they fight for our nation overseas."

The two-day event at Veterans Memorial in downtown Columbus attracted 116 public and private sector employers, all with jobs to offer, ranging from some of Central Ohio's biggest employers to small companies from across the region and state.

Unlike typical job fairs, the Hiring Our Heroes event also offered specialized training workshops aimed at the unique challenges veterans encounter when searching for a non-military related job in the business world.

"Veterans often struggle demonstrating how the skills they learn for the battlefield translate to the office," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "What made this event unique is how it combined job recruitment with personal marketing training and professional resume refining, all aimed at helping our returning service men and women transform military accomplishments into workplace successes."

Added County Commissioner Marilyn Brown, "It is uplifting to see our local companies step up and show their gratitude to our veterans and their families. With so many soldiers soon coming home - especially as troops are withdrawn from the fighting in Afghanistan - there will be even more veterans returning to Central Ohio and entering the job market."

As part of a national effort to connect troops with jobs, the Hiring Our Heroes event in Franklin County was a joint effort by the US Chamber of Commerce, the Columbus Chamber, Leadership Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission, Battelle Memorial Institute, the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation and other public and private-sector partners.

The US Chamber's national Hiring Our Heroes effort launched in March 2011 with a goal of hosting 100 hiring fairs in local communities across the country. To date, these training and job fairs have connected more than 94,000 veterans and military spouses with more than 4,800 different employers.

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